

UNCTAD XI - JITAP Event
JITAP: Capacity building in assuring developmental gains
from the Multilateral Trading System (MTS)
Summary of points: best practices and lessons learnt
São Paulo, 18 June 2004

The special JITAP event was chaired by H.E. Professor E. B. Rugumayo, Minister of Tourism, Trade and Industry of Uganda and by Mr. Mohamed Ould Hitt, Director of Trade of Mauritania. Several delegations from partner countries, from donor and other countries participated in the meeting together with delegates from the regional economic communities. The three executing agencies also participated; namely the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the World Trade Organization. The following eleven points were highlighted during the discussions:

1. As a partnership for trade development, JITAP can make an important contribution to UNCTAD XI's sub-theme of assuring development gains from the international trading system and trade negotiations. This contribution is delivered through capacity building at the levels of institutions, human resources, and enterprises.
2. As a self-implemented, tool-based technical assistance programme, JITAP helps countries develop and/or adjust national trade policies, engage in trade negotiations, develop sector strategies, and elaborate medium and long term vision on trade, investment and development.
3. As a joint initiative of ITC, UNCTAD and WTO, with the valuable support of donor countries, the management approach of JITAP facilitates coordination of technical assistance at the country level at a time when national, mostly limited capacities are stretched and strained by numerous and overlapping negotiating processes. This approach helps countries in taking a more active role in the management of technical cooperation and in better understanding the policies of development partners in this field. The national management mechanisms of JITAP and other programmes should be further integrated in the countries, or even merged for better complementarity of capacity building activities.
4. The capacity set up in JITAP countries assisted them in coordinating the preparatory processes of their negotiating positions and in ensuring a more active participation, as well as adequate follow up of trade negotiations. This model was found efficient in dealing with vast, complex and highly specialized issues of international trade.
5. The institutional framework set up by JITAP to organize national debate on multilateral trade issues proved efficient for involving all parties concerned by the negotiations. The Inter-Institutional Committees (IICs) consistently contributed to enhancing the participation of the private sector, civil society and other development partners in the countries. These committees are supported by a network of trained professionals and a network of specialized MTS information points, namely the Reference centres and National Enquiry Points.
6. The MTS information infrastructure and the network of experts that were established in the 8 initial African JITAP countries are being extended to 8 new African countries that joined the programme. The institutional and human capacities, and the related network are of prime interest to trade experts as a model for helping developing countries and their enterprises to enhance their beneficial participation in the MTS.
7. The trilateral approach of training experts in the MTS, covering simultaneously the MTS rules, the policies and the business aspects helps national experts in acquiring a real knowledge of the agreements and in establishing a multi-disciplinary knowledge base. This

also encourages the constitution of networks of trainers, experts and presenters on the MTS, with multiplier effects. This approach continues to be implemented in the new group of countries and could be applied by each country that so wishes.

8. The coaching approach provided by JITAP for the formulation of sector strategies ensures ownership of the outcomes by all concerned stakeholders participating in the exercise. This warrants implementation of the measures agreed upon. It also reinforces reflection on national development strategies of goods, services and commodities. The methodology applied involves all national partners in the sectors bearing high export potential, thus producing beneficial effects at the macro-economic level and at the level of enterprises that take advantage of the coaching process for enhancing their own ability to strategize on new and existing markets.
9. Sustainability of MTS capacity built is essential for increasing countries' autonomy in ensuring a satisfactory level of economic performance and for fighting poverty. Networking of such capacities in the various countries, which is a key element of JITAP, will be determinant in this context. Substantial support should be provided in encouraging more cooperation among JITAP partner countries. Support and follow up mechanisms should be defined to help the countries expected to leave the programme after the consolidation phase. In the same context, Regional Economic Communities stressed the need to complement national capacities built in the countries with similar efforts at the regional level. The necessity for an increased collaboration between the JITAP and these organizations was retained.
10. The capacity of JITAP to take into full consideration the country priorities and its catalyst role in generating complementary initiatives that aim at developing the supply capacity of the countries for increased trade flows were noted with great interest. The programme helped ensure better allocation of resources by the countries to the work on MTS. It also let them to better assume their responsibilities in negotiations. The other TRTA programmes could be inspired by the JITAP approaches. In this context, the importance of ensuring synergies with other TRTA programmes was highlighted including with the integrated framework through a better integration of the aspects that contribute to poverty eradication and to the mainstreaming of trade into the economic and social development strategies.
11. General satisfaction was expressed by partner countries with the assistance provided by the three agencies and donors. The extension of the JITAP model of technical assistance to other countries was put forward. It was proposed to institutionalize an annual ministerial meeting to review the programme activities and to integrate its experiences at the political level.
